

my pledge to you and my pledge to the body. My statement to the body, though, is 494 is in no shape to be passed today. Senator Abboud made reference to my rather glib remarks about ill-conceived and ill-drafted amendments on General File. Part of them were and we rejected the whole package. I also would like to remind the body that Senator Abboud stood at his microphone with me when we were talking about the amendments and agreed that this original section, the part that I am trying to amend, needs to be attached to the bill. It really does need to be attached to the bill. Let's attach this amendment which needs to be attached to the bill, see if something else happens. If it doesn't happen, fine, let's pass 494, at least put it in the shape to have it passed. We are on Final Reading. We are not going to run out of time for a bill that is on Final Reading to pass this session. It is not going to be stalled but we do have an opportunity once and for all to end this perpetual fight that has been going on in here between the League of Municipalities and the gas companies over exactly how gas rates should be regulated. If you move this bill back and adopt this amendment, at least you are putting this bill in a form in which it could be passed. Secondly, you are giving us some time to really deal with the problem that needs to be dealt with. With that I would urge you to return the bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The question is the return of the bill for a specific amendment. All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. It requires 25 votes. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 5 nays on the motion to return the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The bill is returned. Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. President, members of the body, again the specific amendment we are adopting is that on page 2 of the bill, lines 14 and 15, the current term in the bill says to impose an interim rate increase. The term "interim" is not defined in the bill plus it is wide open for any type of increase that a company could choose to offer. It could be even the Ralston City Council if they would not agree to what the gas company, what Peoples originally filed for, could come in with an interim rate increase, because it is not defined, several times higher than what was originally requested. What this amendment does is it at least locks it